



THE COMMISSARY SITE ON THE PRESIDIO: *the Finalists*

The Presidio Trust will no longer need to fear dependence on Federal money. The Presidio has finally proven that by retrofitting and reusing hundreds of its existing buildings, more than enough operating capital can be raised to assure financial self-sufficiency into the future. There was a federally mandated deadline of 2013 for financial self-sufficiency. Because new uses have been found for buildings which remain from 350 years of military use, the books are now in balance.

In fact, since the Trust is now actually banking a “profit”, it can now afford to look for the best possible solutions for tenants and future space uses. The rosy picture allows the Trust to be choosy; they can finally say that a project that is environmentally superior is feasible. It does not have to be profitable in and of itself, because the other tenants are paying full market-rate rent. An environmental-ly superior use can be chosen, as a “loss leader”, you might say.

So, when weighing alternatives that are proposed for the former Commissary building, the Trust can seek the best possible solution, not go to the most glitzy, entertaining and crowd-pleasing user. The Commissary building is the large concrete building with acres of parking spaces just across from the restored Crissy Marsh, that is currently used by the Sports Basement retail store.

What has been missing from the proposals that are before the Trust for reuse of the Commissary site? The Commissary site presents an unparalleled opportunity to *interpret the history of the former military base* and to communicate with interpretive programs the connection

between the National Historic Landmark District of the Main Post and the rest of the City of San Francisco. None of the uses approved for the National Park so far speak primarily about the history of the site.

In mid-June, at least 450 persons came to a presentation by the three finalists who want to be selected to occupy the Commissary site: PX, Bridge/Sustainability and Lucas Museum. The audience was given one minute to pose a question about the purpose of each finalist’s proposal in the context of the overall Presidio National Park.

The Presidio looks toward the Golden Gate Bridge and all the events of historic significance that tied this post to the rest of the world. These were some of the questions asked of the finalists: *How will your concept tie the Settlement of the West to the Presidio at the Commissary Site? What types of programming will you use to keep local adults as well as children interested and returning for more information over time? How are you going to tell the story about making the Presidio, a uniquely valuable historic site, into a National Park, when it could have been a super luxury residential development?*

More than half of the audience mentioned how detrimental it would be to choose the Lucas project since it is a self-serving proposal that would house George Lucas own collection of illustration, has no implicit connection to the Presidio and could be constructed anywhere in the United States. Next round for the finalists will be in September.

Don't miss SFT's Summer Picnic Saturday, August 17, 2013

Planners and promoters have put the waterfront up for grabs. It's an outrage what is being proposed for the waterfront: say goodbye to views of the Bay. Come at 11:30 a.m. for a waterfront walk, followed by lunch at Delancey Street, 800 The Embarcadero, just across from Piers 30-32 where sports promoters and city officials are proposing a new 13-story Warriors stadium. Meet for the waterfront walk at the Hills Brothers courtyard (see “Palomino” sign on Embarcadero between Folsom and Harrison) at 11:30 a.m. and then move indoors for lunch at 12:30 p.m. Lunch Speaker :Art Agnos; Tour Guide Jennifer Clary. *More details at website www.sftomorrow.org*

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

Rejects Appeal of Beach Chalet Soccer Complex

On May 9th, the California Coastal Commission made an astonishing decision to ignore the Coastal Act. This was despite the presence of over 60 supporters of the appeal to prevent the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department from building a soccer complex in the west end of Golden Gate Park only 400 feet away from the Ocean well within the jurisdiction of the Commission. You remember from previous SFT newsletter articles that the RPD has been hell bent on converting four natural grass playing fields into a soccer attraction that would emphasize nighttime league play for adults, while selling the project to city commissions and the Board of Supervisors as “for the kids”.

Despite their own Staff Report recommending NO ARTIFICIAL TURF in Golden Gate Park, despite a report from the leading expert on the impacts of night lighting detailing the negative effects that this project will have on wildlife, despite a report from the Chair of the United States Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on the destruction of the naturalistic character of the western end of Golden Gate Park, despite all of this -- the California Coastal Commission rejected over 200 appeals of the Beach Chalet project. The only ball in play for defenders of the Park now is the law suit which has been filed by concerned citizens and the Sierra Club which challenges the sufficiency of the EIR underpinning the City decisions. Trial in the court room of Judge Terri Jackson will likely take place in October. The Recreation and Park Department is all puffed up, planning to begin construction in January 2014 unless some intervention occurs in the meantime. Please visit www.sfoceanedge.org for more details. This isn't over yet.

Ask Phil how it works

OUR PARKS AND HOW THEY'RE RUN

As one veteran of the battle to make the City's Recreation and Park Department (RPD) fiscally transparent explains, bond issues make the department eager to take on big projects but unable to maintain them when they do.

The voters approved another major Parks Bond in November, long before the funds in the previous bond had been spent. Most voters do not understand the difference between “capital improvement” (bond money) versus “operating expenditures” (enforcement, maintenance). People want more gardeners and voters think voting for a parks bond will get them more gardeners to maintain their shabby parks. But gardeners cannot be hired from “capital improvement” funds. Trucks and heavy equipment can be purchased, but no truck drivers or gardeners.

Now, apparently there has been a request for \$1,074,000 to replace plastic turf on some of the soccer fields the department has already installed with the aid of City Fields Foundation. After heavy use and usually after about eight years, the toxic rubber-tire-crumb plastic turf must be replaced and carted away, and the costs are astronomical, not just because of the material costs, but because safe disposal costs are very high.

The used turf at the two artificial turf fields currently needing resurfacing must be trucked to a safe site, specifically prepared, almost as if it were atomic waste. The \$1,074,000 item in RPD's 2013-2014 budget would come from the City's General Fund to the Capital budget of RPD. It is important to understand that instead of hiring gardeners with \$1 million from the General Fund, we will be buying new plastic for toxic artificial turf fields. Is everyone clear on where the priorities are for the RPD?

When people call for more gardeners, there is no need to vote a special set-aside of money for the RPD. They already have one, called the Open Space Fund, which is money from the General Fund earmarked every year to support Open Space acquisition and development. The amount annually exceeds \$40 million and it is regularly pilfered by RPD to fund other shortfalls. This means that not very much new open space has been acquired for the City's growing population because the Open Space Fund is used “as a slush fund”, ignoring the City Charter that governs how the money is to be used. There is no entity in San Francisco government that is charged with ensuring that the voters get what they approve. Why give the Recreation and Park Department (RPD) more set-aside money if its use cannot be enforced?.

No Wall on the Waterfront Campaign

Winning the Endorsement Battle. This Spring, the San Francisco Democratic Party, Democratic Clubs in the Richmond, Potrero Hill, and Tenderloin, and the citywide Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods all voted to endorse **No Wall on the Waterfront** and urge a “NO” vote on the 8 Washington height increase measure on the November ballot.

They joined a growing citywide coalition including San Francisco Tomorrow, the Sierra Club, the Affordable Housing Alliance, and the Tenants Union in opposing the 8 Washington waterfront height increase. In early June, the San Francisco Labor Council voted by an overwhelming two-thirds to adopt “No Endorsement” on the 8 Washington ballot measures. Powerful construction unions have been backing 8 Washington so this was quite a victory. The majority of labor decided the proposed 8 Washington waterfront height increase was not something they could endorse.

Exposing Deceptive Advertising. San Francisco environmental groups are warning voters to beware of a misleading advertising campaign aimed at passing a second ballot measure to approve the 8 Washington luxury condo tower. Documents filed with the city Ethics Commission show that the 8 Washington development company spent over \$185,000 in May to launch a multi-media advertising campaign and pay a Los Angeles petition firm to qualify its “8 Washington Street Special Use District” initiative for the November

ballot. Environmental groups San Francisco Tomorrow and the Sierra Club called the 8 Washington campaign ads deceptive and misleading because the ads claim to “open up the waterfront” for open space when in reality the ballot measure would block off the waterfront by increasing the existing legal height limits to build a tower that would be over 50 feet taller than the old, torn-down Embarcadero Freeway. They claim that the 8 Washington measure would “open up the waterfront,” “turn an asphalt parking lot to grass,” and “benefit San Francisco with more public access to the Embarcadero waterfront, more public parkland and open space.” The parking lot would be replaced with a luxury condo tower, not grass, and the so-called “new public park” in the 8 Washington measure is just ¼ acre in size, with most of that area already publicly accessible open space. Two-thirds of the measure’s claimed “recreation and open space” will be private property accessible to luxury condo owners and private health club members only.

Jon Golinger, Campaign Director for **No Wall on the Waterfront**, and recent recipient of SFT’s Unsung Hero Award, has been mobilizing and training volunteers to distribute campaign literature and set people right before they sign the fraudulent 8 Washington petition which is being circulated. “Voters can make up their own minds whether to sign” he said, “but they deserve to know the facts.” www.NoWallOnTheWaterfront.com

ABAG AND MTC make money talk *Regional government shoves its way around.*

Once the twinkle in the planner’s eye, the concept of regional government, in the form of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), has long held an advisory role in the theater of metropolitan Bay Area city planning. Especially after the Census results are published every tenth year, ABAG conducts a study and produces numbers which theoretically direct administrative and legislative action by the cities and counties in the nine-county sphere. ABAG tells the local governments how many new housing units need to be built to match the growth in population, and what level of services such as schools and medical clinics need to be built.

This year ABAG has gotten together with MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) to enable the implementation of State Bill 375 with the objective of tying together the transportation improvements people want with the production of housing units. This *quid pro quo* sounds like good planning but it would force a city to produce x number of housing units to get the transportation improvement it needs. SB 375 sounds good: its goals are to reduce greenhouse emissions and slow climate change. But reading the fine print shows that it would set aside CEQA protection and does not provide for genuine public participation. See more about the One Bay Area Plan at www.sftomorrow.org

For information about San Francisco Tomorrow, go to www.sftomorrow.org



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SFT's Summer Picnic: food and food for thought

Waterfront development issues

August 17, 2013

Will you want to live in San Francisco Tomorrow?

Recycled Paper

SFT's Summer Picnic is Saturday, August 17, 2013

It'll be a great outing in the sunshine and a meeting of minds over lunch.

Planners and promoters have put the waterfront up for grabs. It's an outrage what is being proposed for the waterfront: say goodbye to views of the Bay. Come to walk and to picnic indoors: the waterfront walk begins at 11:30 a.m. followed by lunch at Delancey Street (800 Embarcadero at Brannan), just across the Embarcadero from Piers 30-32 where sports promoters and city officials are proposing a new 13-story Warriors stadium. Meet for the waterfront walk at 11:30 a.m. followed by for lunch at 12:30 p.m. *Meet at 11:30 a.m. in the Hills Brothers courtyard and fountain marked by the sign "Palomino" on the Embarcadero between Folsom and Harrison.* To reserve, call Jane at 564-1482.

Things To Do in July: LABORFEST

It's the 20th Anniversary of LaborFest. As their program assures, "Solidarity Has No Borders. The struggle for labor rights and human rights continues."

Here is a sampling of labor-centered activities July 1 – 31, 2013

July 5 The Spirit of '45 *SF Premiere of Ken Loach film about labor at the end of WWII*

July 6 Golden Gate Bridge Walk *Tribute to the Bridge Builders*

July 6 All Aboard the Niles Canyon Steam Train *History of Trains*

July 7 Dogpatch and Potrero Point Walk *SF's Past commercial industries*

July 8 Chinatown Walk *Starting at Portsmouth Square*

July 9 Home Front Heroes and the Role of Black Workers in the shipyards

July 13 Labor History and Market Street *The Streetcar Strike of 1907*

July 14 WPA Bus Tour with Gray Brechin *Reservations required*

There are more. Go to www.laborfest.net for July's complete schedule

